



SENATOR  
**BILL HARDIMAN**

***E-Hardiman Herald***



*Chair, Families & Human  
Services Committee  
Appropriations Committee:  
Chair, Family Independence  
Agency; Commerce Labor  
& Economic Development,  
Capitol Outlay;  
Higher Education*

### **JOBS II moving forward**

The Senate is hard at work on the second phase of the JOBS plan. Senate Resolution 224, which opposes any new or revised administrative rules more stringent than federal policies that impede economic development and job creation, is designed to prevent job losses. Companies looking to expand or relocate may lose interest in Michigan because of overly stringent standards. The resolution states that policies can impact the development of the economy and job creation. It also points out that it is imperative every regulation be developed in the real-world context of our state's competition for economic development and jobs.

The Senate also is working on Senate Bills 1093 and 1094. SB 1093 offers companies with less than \$10 million in annual sales a tax credit for hiring new employees. The credit is equal to 3 percent of the compensation paid to the new employees. SB 1094 would allow an affiliated group of U.S. corporations to file a combined or consolidated state tax return, making the process more efficient and less costly.

SR 224 and SBs 1093 and 1094 are part of the second phase of JOBS — “Job Opportunities for Business Success,” a broad-ranging Republican call to action on Michigan's job creation front. JOBS II picks up where JOBS left off by creating new job opportunities, saving existing jobs and promoting a friendlier and healthier business climate in Michigan. Additional components of the JOBS II plan are expected to be introduced in the coming weeks.

### **Prepaid funeral protection bills signed into law**

Legislation protecting consumers' prepaid funeral arrangements was signed into law. Public Acts 21 and 22 require all sellers of prepaid funeral goods and services to place 100 percent of a consumer's money in a secure escrow account. This ensures the money is available to pay for goods and services at a later date or provide a full refund, if necessary. The legislation also ensures that purchasers of cemetery goods and services can receive a full refund.

### **Federal Medicaid funds could be in jeopardy**

Legislation introduced to address concerns surrounding the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency was discussed in the Senate Committee on Health Policy. The legislation converts the agency to an independent authority and changes the makeup of the board overseeing it. The DWCCMH's failure to fulfill their state Medicaid contract jeopardizes all the federal Medicaid funds received by Michigan. Losing the DWCCMH Medicaid funds alone would total \$500 million.

If the federal waiver is lost, the entire state community mental health system would be bid out and consumers could be at the mercy of the lowest bidder looking to make a profit. Testimony taken at the committee meeting included concerns regarding responsibility, accountability and the make-up of the board.

### **Abstinence education legislation sent to full Senate**

The Senate is expected to take up an abstinence education legislative package now that it has cleared the Senate Education Committee. The abstinence-education legislation would give parents a larger role in how public schools teach sex education. It would require students be taught about the responsibility of being a parent, as well as describe adoption as a positive option for unplanned pregnancies and encourage abstinence until marriage. It also would require teaching that abstinence is the only 100-percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases.

The legislation also would create health-education advisory panels formed by local school boards. The majority of members on the panels would have to be parents of children attending school in the district. Another part of the package would create a complaint process that could result in a 5-percent penalty in school aid for noncompliance.

### **Out-of-state waste bills sent to governor**

The Senate passed sweeping restrictions on the importation of Canadian and out-of-state waste, set a two-year moratorium on new landfills, and gave broader authority to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to enforce these tougher garbage standards. This legislative package represents a bi-partisan effort to limit the importation of Canadian and out-of-state waste. Canadian and out-of-state-waste accounts for approximately 25 percent of all trash entering Michigan's landfills.

The bills provide a comprehensive revision of the state's solid-waste management laws to include additional protections against the disposal of inappropriate waste in Michigan's landfills. The new rules require all Canadian and out-of-state waste to meet the same stringent standards Michigan has for its own waste. Landfills would be required to refuse any out-of-state waste that did not meet the tough standards.

## **Governor's veto criticized**

The governor's veto of a bill that would have created sensible, market-based rules for new specialty fund-raising plates and allowed for the continuation of current fund-raising plates was unwarranted and is a blow to Michigan charities and education, Michigan senators said this week. Senate Bill 785 established uniform rules for adding and removing specialty license plates. It also repealed the sunset date for current specialty fund-raising plates. With the veto, the future of current fund-raising plates is in jeopardy, as they will become invalid after Oct. 1, 2005.

The governor has suggested she would approve a bill eliminating the sunset but does not want the program expanded. Senators are concerned the governor is not listening to the public because people are calling for an opportunity to support their causes and now they won't get that chance.

The legislation would have required the plate's sponsoring organization to pay \$15,000 to cover start-up costs, saving taxpayers' money. At least 2,000 would have to be sold in the first year and 500 new plates each additional year. Those new plates would provide \$25 to the sponsoring organization for each plate sold, just as the existing plates do for universities and other causes.

## **Senate approves benefit fund for fallen officers**

The Michigan Senate gave unanimous approval to legislation that creates a fund for survivors of public safety officers killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty. House Bill 4178 creates a state-funded death benefit for public safety officers employed at the state level. The bill provides for a one-time payment of \$25,000 to the spouse, dependents, estate or caregiver of a public safety officer – including law enforcement officers, firefighters, rescue squad members, and ambulance crewmembers – who dies or is permanently disabled in the line of duty. The Senate amended the bill to include local public safety officers and make families of officers killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty on or after Oct. 1, 2003, eligible for benefits. Michigan is one of only a few states without a state-funded death benefit for state-employed public safety officers. The fund would be created within the Department of Treasury and money that remains in the fund would not lapse into the general fund. The bill now returns to the House for concurrence.

## **Contact Information**

The Hardiman Herald by Senator Bill Hardiman is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of his activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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